U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Great Lakes Region
2300 East Devon Avenue
Des Plaines, IL 60018

JUL 7 2011

Mr. Brendan McLaughlin
Executive Director
O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission
P.O. Box 1126
Des Plaines, IL 60017

Dear Mr. McLaughlin:

Thank you for your letter of May 27, 2011, addressing concerns from the Itasca Village Board and local residents, and inquiring about the potential of steepening the glidepaths and modifying the existing nighttime runway utilization at O'Hare International Airport (ORD).

You are correct that there are other airports with procedures which allow for steeper glidepaths than those utilized at ORD. However, these procedures were developed to accommodate conditions such as mountainous terrain or other obstacles that would prevent a standard approach to the airport. Additionally, these airports are smaller airports than ORD, and more importantly, the aircraft using these airports are smaller than those serving ORD. In accordance with FAA Order 8260.54A (Paragraph 2.10 enclosed), the maximum authorized glidepath angle for over 99 percent of aircraft that utilize ORD is 3.1 degrees. In fact, the 3.0 degree glidepath has been determined to be the optimal approach glidepath angle for all aircraft, from an operational safety perspective. For ORD the 3.0 degrees could only be increased to the maximum allowable (3.1 degrees) in order to clear obstacles. There are no obstacles in the runway approaches at ORD, therefore given this fact, and the types/sizes of aircraft serving ORD, all ORD approaches operate with a 3.0 degree glidepath angle, and in fact must operate in that manner.

The O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission (ONCC) has correctly identified that Runway 10 (future 10L) will accommodate 23.8 percent of all nighttime arrivals upon completion of the O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP). Runway 10 is the longest runway on the airport and is utilized by most cargo carriers for their operations. The City of Chicago has stated, at ONCC Technical Committee meetings over the past year, that they would be supportive of considering and analyzing modifications to their current "Fly Quiet" program once the OMP is completed. Any interim changes (before OMP completion) to the currently approved Fly Quiet program would need to be approached through discussions between the City and ONCC. Such discussions would require consultation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and may require some degree of environmental review, should the parties agree to pursue any such changes.

The FAA appreciates the opportunity to address your concerns. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at 847-294-7295.

Sincerely,

Barry D. Cooper
Regional Administrator
Great Lakes Region

Enclosure

Chapter 2. General Criteria

Section 3. Basic Vertically Guided Final Segment General Criteria

2.10 Authorized Glidepath Angles (*GPAs*).

The **optimum** (design standard) glidepath angle is 3 degrees. ***GPA***s greater than 3 degrees that conform to *table 2-4* are authorized without Flight Standards/ military authority approval only when obstacles prevent use of 3 degrees. Flight Standards approval is required for angles less than 3 degrees or for angles greater than the minimum angle required for obstacle clearance.

Note: USAF only – apply guidance per AFI 11-230.

Table 2-4.
Maximum Allowable GPAs.*

Category	θ
A**	5.7
B	4.2
C	3.6
D&E	3.1

** LPV: Where **HATh** < 250, Cat A-C Max 3.5 degrees, Cat D/E Max 3.1 degrees.*
*** Cat A 6.4 degrees if V_{KIAS} limited to 80 knots maximum. Apply the **TERPS**, Volume 1, chapter 3 minimum **HATh** values based on glidepath angle where they are higher than the values in this order.*

2.11 Threshold Crossing Height (*TCH*).

Select the appropriate ***TCH*** from *table 2-5*. Publish a note indicating ***VGSI*** not coincident with the procedures designed descent angle (***VDA*** or ***GPA***, as appropriate) when the ***VGSI*** angle differs by more than 0.2 degrees or when the ***VGSI TCH*** is more than 3 ft from the designed ***TCH***.

*Note: If an **ILS** is published to the same runway as the **RNAV** procedure, it's **TCH** and glidepath angle values should be used in the **RNAV** procedure design. The **VGSI TCH**/angle should be used (if within table 4-5 tolerances) where a vertically guided procedure does not serve the runway.*